
**SUMMARY OF REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ON THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN DANGEROUS DRUGS
FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 1938.**

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Summary of report by the Government of India on the illicit traffic in dangerous drugs for the calendar year 1938.

Question 1.—Please give a general account of the illicit traffic in the country in the course of the past year indicating the origin from which the substances have most often been found to be derived—whether by diversion from legitimate channels, with special reference to the points at which the substances were diverted into the illicit traffic, or from clandestine manufacture or production, marks and labels which recur, the routes most frequently followed by contraband, the methods most frequently used by smugglers.

Illicit import traffic.—Charas, cocaine and opium were the principal articles of smuggling. Charas was smuggled into India from across the border by transborder Pathans or through the tribal territory in Kohat Pass. The smuggling of charas from Central Asia has largely ceased owing to the prohibition imposed by the Chinese Government, but its illegal import continued out of the stocks of charas previously stored by smugglers of tribal territory. The *gardah* charas which was of inferior quality was smuggled in small quantities from Gardez in Afghanistan. The contraband is usually smuggled by means of carriers on their persons or in lorries, tongas or camels and donkeys.

Illicit traffic in cocaine was practically insignificant on account of the Sino-Japanese war. Whatever quantities were smuggled entered India mainly by the port of Calcutta. The ships on which the drug was seized arrived from the Far East and the route followed was generally Osaka, Kobe, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Penang and Rangoon. The source of supply was believed to be either Japan or China. The trade was mainly in the hands of Chinese who sold it in small quantities to hawkers. The contraband was hidden usually on the persons of the crew, in the engine rooms of launches or among the cargo. At times the drug is smuggled in sealed tins attached under water to the hull of a steamer. It is not possible to state with any accuracy the origin of the drug seized in illicit traffic as the labels and wrappers, etc., seized on the containers were patent forgeries of genuine labels and, where labels, etc., were not available, the carriers of the drug seldom gave correct information as to the source of its supply.

Since the prohibition imposed by the Chinese Government on the export of charas, smugglers have turned their attention to illicit imports of Afghan opium into the North-West Frontier Province which are on the increase. Opium is smuggled from Ningrahar and Khost in Afghanistan and from Kaya Khabbal (tribal territory) on the Hazara border. As in previous years, there was a considerable amount of illicit traffic in opium and ganja in Assam during the year 1938. The illicit opium was smuggled into the Province from the unadministered territories along the North-East Frontier and Nepal. Illicit ganja, either cultivated, semi-cultivated or wild was smuggled from Bhutan and Naga, the Khasi, Jaintia and the Lushai Hills. The Nagas, Manipuris and the Bhutias generally come down to the plains during the cold weather bringing ganja, together with other articles of merchandise.

Illicit export traffic.—There was practically no illicit outward traffic in cocaine, morphia or hemp drugs. Owing to the control taken over the

accumulated stocks of opium in certain Indian States and restriction of poppy cultivation both in British India and Indian States, India is no longer a source of supply for illicit raw opium in the Far East. Opium and ganja were smuggled from the Madras Province to Ceylon and Burma. The general proposal to issue to Indian States opium with an earmarking substance so as to facilitate identification was dropped as it was not practicable to issue opium in more than one shade and its issue in one shade would not have helped in tracing the State from which the contraband came. At the request of the Punjab Government, arrangements have, however, been made to supply to the Patiala State only opium with an earmarking substance.

Inter-provincial smuggling.—This traffic was chiefly confined to ganja, charas, cocaine and opium. The smuggling of charas from the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab received a set back during the year. This was partly due to the difficulties in obtaining supplies from the Chinese Turkistan, which is the main source of supply and partly to the increase in the retail selling price of the drug in the Punjab. The prohibition of charas consumption in certain provinces and the disparity in the prices prevailing in the Punjab and other Provinces still made smuggling attractive.

All the cocaine found in the illicit market was of foreign origin. Calcutta continued to be the distributing centre for the smuggling of cocaine, but since the outbreak of hostilities between China and Japan, sources of supply have been completely cut off and the smuggling of cocaine has nearly stopped. Most of the drug sold was spurious cocaine. Opium was formerly smuggled to Calcutta in exchange for cocaine, but on account of the fall in the cocaine trade the smuggling of opium also received a set-back. Besides Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Amritsar, Peshawar, Ajmer, Cawnpore, Benares, Allahabad, Patna and Dacca were the chief centres in British India and Jaipur, Tonk, Kotah, Ujjain, Indore and Rampur in the States. The Peshawar district, where certain leading smugglers of all-India notoriety reside, was a centre for the distribution of cocaine throughout India.

Opium was obtained by the illicit trade in India chiefly from the Rajputana Malwa tract on account of the cheaper rates and the facility with which the drug could be obtained there. Owing to the strict watch kept over the licensed cultivators and vendors of opium in British India, cases of leakage of excise opium were few and far between.

hand bags and fruit baskets with sundry eatables on the top and contraband at the bottom. In the year under report, a novel method of importing contraband drugs from up-country places to Calcutta was adopted by the smugglers. The carriers bearing contraband on their persons having carefully noted the number of the carriage boarded the train. In the train they went into the lavatory and bolting the door from inside, unscrewed the planks and boards of the side wall with screw drivers and put the contraband into the recess of the window and then screwed up the little planks again in the place. This ensured their safe carriage on the way. After the train had left the checking stations, the carriers went to the lavatory again, unscrewed the planks, took out the contraband from the hiding place and put it on their person to get out as quickly as possible on their reaching Howrah.

Question 2.—Please give in the case of countries where the opium poppy, the coca plant and Indian hemp are cultivated and are subject to control information regarding any important changes as regards the extent of illicit cultivation, the districts where such cultivation exists, the quantities of the products estimated to be harvested illicitly, the amounts estimated to be clandestinely consumed or exported and the steps taken to prevent clandestine cultivation.

There was no noticeable fluctuation in the extent of illicit cultivation and consumption of these drugs. Cultivation of the coca plant was absolutely prohibited in India. The production of ganja was prohibited except in small areas where it was cultivated under licence. The production and sale of bhang were also regulated and restricted, so far as was practicable, having regard to the fact that it was possible to obtain it from the wild plant which grew in many parts of India. Similarly, in British India the cultivation of poppy was allowed in certain selected areas in the United Provinces and the Punjab under licence and, as strict watch was kept by the Excise and Police authorities to see that no illicit cultivation of the drug was resorted to, illicit cultivation was not possible except in a few remote hilly tracts of the country. The cultivation of poppy for opium in the Punjab has been prohibited with effect from 1st April 1936. No estimate can be given of the drugs clandestinely harvested or consumed in the country. From statement No. I enclosed it will, however, be seen that in 1938 there were only a few cases of illicit cultivation of opium and Indian hemp.

Question 3.—Please give the number of prosecutions (mentioning any points of special interest regarding the occupation of accused) and of convictions for illicit manufacture, illicit import or export or trade, possession, etc., and the penalties imposed.

For number of prosecutions and convictions for illicit manufacture, import or export, etc., and penalties imposed, please see statements I and II attached.

Occupations of the accused.—The accused were either professional smugglers, carriers or agents of the smugglers but, in order to put the Police, Customs and Excise authorities on the wrong scent, they ostensibly followed some other profession, e.g., motor car drivers, brokers, cobblers, coolies, fruit vendors, and members of the crews of river launches.

Question 4.—*Please give particulars of any important cases of illicit traffic not already separately reported to the League of Nations (Article 23 of the Limitation Convention of 1931).*

The following important cases of illicit traffic were detected during the year :—

- (1) .621 kg. of cocaine was recovered at the Akola railway station from a Pathan of Peshawar—a notorious inter-provincial trafficker in drugs. He was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. He did not disclose the source of supply and was carrying the drug to Bombay.
- (2) A parcel of 31.323 kgs. of ganja was reported to have been received at Negapatam Beach Railway Station from Jannaghatta R. S. near Kolar, Mysore. On suspicion the parcel was opened by the Railway Police. The case has been treated as undetected as the accused was not traceable.
- (3) There was only one seizure of cocaine by the Calcutta Customs Department where one man on board the S.S. "Kum-sung", a Far East vessel plying between Calcutta and Hongkong via Singapore and Penang was arrested with .338 kg. of the drug and was convicted.
- (4) Two important cases of Nepal ganja amounting to 6.08 kgs. and 19.635 kgs. were detected. The accused in the first case was coming from Mokameh and had the ganja concealed in an underwear and inside a small mattress. The accused in the other case was a man of Patna. He collected the ganja probably in Nepal Terai and sent the drug in six bags of pumpkin seeds from Patna City Station to the goods sheds at Chitpur Station.
- (5) .305 kg. of cocaine were recovered at Chaukaghat Railway Station from the possession of a person, who alleged to be a resident of Rampur. The drug seized was ingeniously concealed in the false side of a steel trunk and alleged to have been obtained from Calcutta.
- (6) At Lucknow Railway Station, a resident of Rampur, with his servant while travelling by the Punjab Mail was arrested with 28.809 kgs. of charas. The drug seized was alleged to have been obtained from Patiala State and was intended for smuggling to Calcutta.
- (7) Five Pathans of Tribal Territory were arrested at Ludhiana railway station with 35.532 kgs. of Afghan opium, ingeniously concealed in special pockets of waistcoats worn by them. The drug was being smuggled from Tribal Territory to Jind and Patiala States. The accused, on being sent up for trial, were convicted and each was sentenced to undergo 18 months' rigorous imprisonment.
- (8) 144.921 kg. of Punjab Hill opium was seized by a head constable of Ambala District Police. This opium was being smuggled in a car from Sirpur State to Nabha State.

- (9) On 17th May 1938, the Excise Intelligence Bureau staff, Madras arrested two persons at Pasumalai Railway Station while taking delivery of two dealwood case parcels containing 184 half seer cakes (equivalent to 86.020 kgs.) of opium booked from Mavur (Patiala State). Both the accused were convicted. The opium was intended for smuggling to Ceylon.

Question 5.—Please give statistics of the total quantities of opium and other dangerous drugs (including prepared opium, except in the case of countries parties to the Geneva Agreement of 1925 and the Bangkok Agreement of 1931 which furnish a separate annual report on prepared opium) confiscated in the country.

These statistics should give the total amounts of substances confiscated including the amounts returned to the Permanent Central Board on Statistical Form E (GL) as confiscated on account of illicit import and export.

Statistics should be given in kilogrammes and grammes and in the case of manufactured drugs, in terms of the basic anhydrous alkaloid.

For statistics of quantities of opium and other dangerous drugs seized during the year 1938, please see statements I, II and III attached.

Question 6.—Please give any available information regarding the prices (wholesale and retail) of drugs as sold in the illicit traffic, indicating as far as possible the degree of adulteration of such drugs. Give explanations, where possible, regarding important fluctuations in prices in the illicit traffic.

The wholesale and retail sale prices of illicit opium, hemp drugs and cocaine during the year were as under :—

			Wholesale price.		Retail sale price.
			Rs.		Rs.
Opium	..	..	15 to 100	per seer	20 to 480 per seer.
Charas	..	..	25 to 100	..	50 to 240 ..
Ganja	..	..	8 to 50	..	40 to 80 ..
Bhang	..	..	1/8/- to 6	..	Not known.
Cocaine	..	..	50 to 240	per oz	100 to 450 per oz.

The prices of contraband drugs fluctuated according to demand and supply and were naturally connected with the prices prevailing for drugs obtainable through licensees. As the rate of duty on opium and charas varied in different provinces, prices also varied between different provinces. Novocaine or other similar ingredients were mixed with cocaine in retail sale, hence the retail price of cocaine became much higher than the wholesale price. Its price had gone still higher owing to the shortage of supply since the Sino-Japanese war. Since licit opium and charas were available for sale at licensed shops in Bombay, the selling price of illicit opium and charas was comparatively low in this province. Licit cocaine was not available except for medicinal purposes, and the addicts therefore were prepared to pay high prices for the illicit stuff. The opium sold by illicit dealers in Bengal was almost crude opium. The hemp drugs were not adulterated. There was no important fluctuation in the illicit traffic during the year under report. The illicit traffic in these drugs seemed to owe its existence not so much to the restriction upon sale and possession

as to the high rates of taxation and retail price for licit supply. It was only in areas in and around Calcutta and in industrial areas, where the limit of retail sale of opium without permit had been reduced to 12 grains that owing to this special restriction upon sales, there was a certain amount of smuggling of the drug from the neighbouring British tracts where the limit of sale was 1 tola or from the French Settlement at Chandernagore. For illicit cocaine the price demanded was higher than the price of the licit drug. This was undoubtedly due to restriction imposed upon sale and possession of the drug. The disparity in prices of charas prevailing in the United Provinces and the Punjab and Delhi still made smuggling attractive to smugglers in the United Provinces. The smuggling of Nepali ganja into the districts of the United Provinces bordering on Nepal continued, as the prices in Nepal were much lower. As there was no special demand of contraband charas and opium in the Punjab, the sale prices of these drugs varied considerably. The variation in prices was also due to the percentage of adulteration. On account of the restriction imposed by the annual ten per cent. reduction of opium rations of consumers below 50 years of age, the demand for illicit opium had grown very acute in Assam. These opium consumers supplemented their reduced rations by purchasing illicit opium and so the demand for contraband opium was on the increase and the smugglers' margin of profit was worth running the risks of importing contraband opium from places outside Assam. The import of contraband opium into the North-West Frontier Province showed an increase on account of prohibition of cultivation of hemp plants and of bumper crops of poppy in Afghanistan. In the Central Provinces, Sind, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, illicit traffic being on a small scale, the matter was not of much importance. In Madras, Bihar, Baluchistan, Delhi and Panth Piploda, no information was available about whole sale and retail sale prices of drugs.

Contraband opium was generally found in an adulterated state. Charas was also usually adulterated with foreign matter to the extent of about 20 to 25 per cent. Tobacco and catechu were frequently added to charas and opium respectively, to increase the weight. Adulteration of cocaine in the illicit traffic was common. The chief adulterants for cocaine were novocaine and boric acid.

STATEMENTS.

Statement showing the total number of prosecutions and convictions (with other than smuggling from or to places outside India which are shown of each drug seized and penalties

Province.	Total number of prosecutions.				Total number of convictions.			
	Opium.	Morphine.	Hemp drugs.	Cocaine.	Opium.	Morphine.	Hemp drugs.	Cocaine.
Madras	118	..	441	..	101	..	427	..
Bombay	393	..	469	7	353	..	417	3
Sind	60	1	183	1	41	..	125	1
Bengal	202	2	807	22	199	2	621	14
Bihar	22	..	729	..	17	..	674	..
Orissa	36	..	37	..	26	..	22	.
United Provinces	319	..	663	16	258	..	492	14
Punjab	1123	1	50	3	164	1	45	2
Central Provinces	172	..	292	1	135	..	133	1
Assam	294	..	277	..	211	.	245	..
North-West Frontier Province	163	..	29	..	163	..	18	.
Delhi	4	..	18	6	4	..	16	6
Ajmer-Merwara including Railway lands in Rajputana and Central India	29	..	2	7	2	.	2	1
Cooch . . . . .	..	..	3	.	..	.	2	..
Palestine . . . . .	..	..	.	.	..	..	..	..
Panath District . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Andaman and Nicobar Islands . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

MENT I.

an indication as to the nature of offence leading to conviction) for offences in Statement II below) relating to dangerous drugs separately, quantities imposed during the year 1938.

Nature of offence leading to conviction.	Penalties imposed.	Quantity of drugs seized.											
		Opium.		Morphine.		Hemp drug.						Cocaine.	
		Kg.	Gm.	Kg.	Gm.	Ganja.		Charas.		Bhang.		Kg.	Gm.
Illicit transport, possession, sale, and cultivation.	Fine and imprisonment.	268		..	..	42	5 (230 hemp plants)	..	..	..	..	..	..
Illicit cultivation, possession, sale or inter-provincial import or export.	Do.	70	633	..	..	26	147	63	142	5	332	..	88
Possession, import and sale.	Fine and imprisonment.	1 (170 plants)	327	..	3	..	58	4	452	562	384 (244 plants)	..	1
Illicit possession, sale, cultivation, import, and transport.	Fine and R. I.	350	125	..	69	155	92	119	281	262	687	..	221
Illicit possession, cultivation and sale.	Do.	..	413	..	..	27	67	..	..	242	195	..	..
Ditto	Fine and imprisonment.	5	516	..	..	11	912 and 321 hemp plants.	..	..	..	336	..	..
Illicit possession, sale, import and cultivation.	Do.	237 (41 plants & 56 packets)	886	..	..	227	1487 and 24 plants.	47 and 252 packets.	549	238 and 13 plants.	119	1 and 29 packets.	56
Ditto	Do.	256 and 12 poppy heads.	320 768	Nominal.		..	..	0	465	44	216	..	2
Illegal import, sale, cultivation, manufacture and possession.	Do.	11	268	..	..	4 and 25 ganja plants.	376	4	743	..	665	..	619
Illicit growing, possession, sale and importation.	Do.	144	736	..	..	286	318	..	..	..	..	..	..
Unlawful possession, sale and import.	Fine and R. I.	83	..	..	..	..	..	41	..	11	..	..	..
Illegal possession and sale.	Fine and imprisonment.	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	63	..	..	..	11
Illicit possession, cultivation and sale.	Fine and rigorous imprisonment.	96	135	..	..	..	..	..	99	..	..	Nominal.	
Illicit cultivation and sale.	Fine	..	..	..	..	..	50 and one plant.	..	..	..	..	..	..
....
Illicit possession	Fine and imprisonment.	..	907	..	..	..	..	..	668	..	18	..	..

and poppy heads.

STATE

Statement showing total number of seizures, prosecutions, convictions, etc., from or into British India (from or to places outside India, that

Province.	Particulars of drugs.	Total number of seizures (cases).		Name of place (origin or destination).	
		Import.	Export.	Import.	Export.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Madras	Opium . . . . .	..	6	..	Ceylon and Kathal
	Hemp Drug (Ganja) . . .	1	2	Kathal	Straits Settlements and Kathal
Bombay	Opium	4	1	Patra	Not known.
	Hemp drug (Charas) . . .	1	11	Patra	London, Patra and China.
Sind	Opium	2	..	Iran	..
Bengal	Cocaine	1	..	Seized on a ship plying between Calcutta and Hong Kong and Penang and Borneo	Ship plying between Calcutta and Hong Kong and Singapore and Penang
	Opium	1	1	Tibet	Seized on a ship plying between Calcutta and Hong Kong and Singapore and Penang
	Hemp Drug (Ganja) . . .	6	..	Nepal	..
	Opium	4	..	Do.	..
Bihar	Hemp drug (Ganja) . . .	254	..	Do.	..
Orissa	Opium . . . . .	..	..	..	..
United Provinces . . .	Opium . . . . .	..	..	..	..
Punjab	Opium	22	..	Afghanistan	..
	Hemp Drug (Charas) . . .	3	..	Tibet, Persia, Iran, Afghanistan	..
Central Provinces . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Assam . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..
N. W. F. Province . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Bihar . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Ajmer-Merwara . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Coorg . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Pakistan	Opium	8	..	Afghanistan	..
Barth Plateau . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..
Amoyan and Nicobar Islands . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..

Note.—Much more than the quantity shown in the statement is consumed in the British India. The cases of smuggling between foreign countries and British India.

* Relates only to the cases of the drug seized, destination of the same being given in the notes.

into India from foreign countries but the figures shown therein include only such cases as are preventable.

STATEMENT III.

Statement showing prosecutions, convictions and penalties imposed for offences relating to opium smoking and quantities of prepared opium confiscated during the year 1938.

Province.	Total number of prosecutions.	Total number of convictions.	Nature of offence.	Penalties imposed.	Quantity of prepared opium seized.
					Kg. Grm.
Madras	1	1	Illicit possession	Imprisonment	0
Bombay	71	82	Illicit possession and sale	Fine and imprisonment	400
Sindh	12	11	Do.	Do.	239
Bengal	235	151	Illicit possession, manufacture, sale, smoking in assembly and for opening a den.	Fine and imprisonment	703
Bihar	..	..	.....	.....	.....
Orissa	31	24	Illicit manufacture of prepared opium, opium smoking, keeping smoking den, sale and possession of smoking apparatus.	Fine and imprisonment	163 grm. apprxly., besides materials, implements and apparatus used for manufacture and smoking of prepared opium.
United Provinces	188	165	Manufacture, sale, possession, keeping of smoking dens and being members of opium smoking assembly.	Do.	997
Punjab	99	118	Smoking den.	.....	..
Total Provinces	117	322	Smoking den and keeping smoking den.	Fine and imprisonment	328
Assam	..	..	.....	.....	..
Northern Frontier Provinces	..	..	.....	.....	..
Dominion	1	1	.....	Imprisonment	..
Assam	..	..	.....	.....	..
Central Provinces	..	..	.....	.....	..
Madras	..	..	.....	.....	..
Bombay	..	..	.....	.....	..
Bengal	..	..	.....	.....	..
Bihar	..	..	.....	.....	..
Orissa	..	..	.....	.....	..
United Provinces	..	..	.....	.....	..
Punjab	..	..	.....	.....	..
Total Provinces	..	..	.....	.....	..

